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SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

Upon Written Request, Copies Available From
Securities and Exchange Commission
Office of FOIA Services
100 F Street, NE
Washington, DC 20549-2736

Extension: Rule 154

SEC File No. 270-438, OMB Control No. 3235-0495

Notice is hereby given that, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”) has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget a request for extension of the previously approved collection of information discussed below.

The federal securities laws generally prohibit an issuer, underwriter, or dealer from delivering a security for sale unless a prospectus meeting certain requirements accompanies or precedes the security. Rule 154 (17 CFR 230.154) under the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77a) (the “Securities Act”) permits, under certain circumstances, delivery of a single prospectus to investors who purchase securities from the same issuer and share the same address (“householding”) to satisfy the applicable prospectus delivery requirements.¹ The purpose of

¹ The Securities Act requires the delivery of prospectuses to investors who buy securities from an issuer or from underwriters or dealers who participate in a registered distribution of securities. See Securities Act sections 2(a)(10), 4(1), 4(3), 5(b) (15 U.S.C. 77b(a)(10), 77d(1), 77d(3), 77e(b)); see also rule 174 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.174) (regarding the prospectus delivery obligation of dealers); rule 15c2-8 under the Securities (continued)

rule 154 is to reduce the amount of duplicative prospectuses delivered to investors sharing the same address.

Under rule 154, a prospectus is considered delivered to all investors at a shared address, for purposes of the federal securities laws, if the person relying on the rule delivers the prospectus to the shared address, addresses the prospectus to the investors as a group or to each of the investors individually, and the investors consent to the delivery of a single prospectus. The rule applies to prospectuses and prospectus supplements. Currently, the rule permits householding of all prospectuses by an issuer, underwriter, or dealer relying on the rule if, in addition to the other conditions set forth in the rule, the issuer, underwriter, or dealer has obtained from each investor written or implied consent to householding.² The rule requires issuers, underwriters, or dealers that wish to household prospectuses with implied consent to send a notice to each investor stating that the investors in the household will receive one prospectus in the future unless the investors provide contrary instructions. In addition, at least once a year, issuers, underwriters, or dealers, relying on rule 154 for the householding of prospectuses relating to open-end management investment companies that are registered under

Exchange Act of 1934 (17 CFR 240.15c2-8) (prospectus delivery obligations of brokers and dealers).

² Rule 154 permits the householding of prospectuses that are delivered electronically to investors only if delivery is made to a shared electronic address and the investors give written consent to householding. Implied consent is not permitted in such a situation. See rule 154(b)(4).

the Investment Company Act of 1940 (“mutual funds”) must explain to investors who have provided written or implied consent how they can revoke their consent.³ Preparing and sending the notice and the annual explanation of the right to revoke are collections of information.

The rule allows issuers, underwriters, or dealers to household prospectuses if certain conditions are met. Among the conditions with which a person relying on the rule must comply are providing notice to each investor that only one prospectus will be sent to the household and, in the case of issuers that are mutual funds, providing to each investor who consents to householding an annual explanation of the right to revoke consent to the delivery of a single prospectus to multiple investors sharing an address. The purpose of the notice and annual explanation requirements of the rule is to ensure that investors who wish to receive individual copies of prospectuses are able to do so.

Although rule 154 is not limited to mutual funds, the Commission believes that it is used mainly by mutual funds and by broker-dealers that deliver mutual fund prospectuses. The Commission is unable to estimate the number of issuers other than mutual funds that rely on the rule.

The Commission estimates that, as of August 2018, there are approximately 1,590 mutual funds, approximately 400 of which engage in direct marketing and therefore deliver their own prospectuses. Of the approximately 400 mutual funds that engage in direct marketing, the Commission estimates that approximately half of these mutual funds (200) (i) do not send the implied consent notice requirement because they obtain affirmative written consent to household

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See Rule 154(c).

prospectuses in the fund's account opening documentation; or (ii) do not take advantage of the householding provision because of electronic delivery options which lessen the economic and operational benefits of rule 154 when compared with the costs of compliance.

The Commission estimates that there are approximately 175 broker-dealers that carry customer accounts for the remaining mutual funds and therefore may be required to deliver mutual fund prospectuses. The Commission estimates that each affected broker-dealer will spend, on average, 20 hours complying with the notice requirement of the rule, for a total of 3,500 hours. Therefore, the total number of respondents for rule 154 is 475 (300⁴ mutual funds plus 175 broker-dealers), and the estimated total hour burden is approximately 7,975 hours (4,300 hours for mutual funds plus 3,675 hours for broker-dealers).

The estimate of average burden hours is made solely for the purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and is not derived from a comprehensive or even a representative survey or study of the costs of Commission rules and forms.

Compliance with the collection of information requirements of the rule is necessary to obtain the benefit of relying on the rule. Responses to the collections of information will not be kept confidential. The rule does not require these records be retained for any specific period of time. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number.

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The Commission estimates that 200 mutual funds prepare both the implied consent notice and the annual explanation of the right to revoke consent + 100 mutual funds that prepare only the annual explanation of the right to revoke.

The public may view the background documentation for this information collection at the following website, www.reginfo.gov. Comments should be directed to: (i) Desk Officer for the Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10102, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503, or by sending an e-mail to: Lindsay.M.Abate@omb.eop.gov ; and (ii) Charles Riddle, Acting Director/Chief Information Officer, Securities and Exchange Commission, c/o Candace Kenner, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549 or send an email to: PRA_Mailbox@sec.gov. Comments must be submitted to OMB within 30 days of this notice.

Dated: November 13, 2018.

Eduardo A. Aleman,
Assistant Secretary.

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